

BEAVER COUNTY (UTAH). COUNTY COMMISSION ^[115]

MINUTES, 1856-[ongoing]

DESCRIPTION: These minute books record the actions of the county commission (known during the territorial period as the county court), the governing body of the county. The commission was authorized to manage all county business and county property. This includes budgeting, equipment purchasing and auditing; use of county lands; districting for schools, roads, voting, drainage, etc.; taxing, specifically acting as an ex-officio board of equalization; business licensing; arranging for the construction of roads, public buildings, etc.; contracting for services; supervising the conduct and payment of all county personnel; providing for basic health care, public safety, and care of the indigent; canvassing election returns and appointing certain officials; and by 1959, zoning and planning. The day's entries are prefaced by date, names of those present and where and when they met. The entries detail actions taken, amounts involved, and the names of any individuals affected by the actions.

Following the formation of territorial government, the legislature in 1852 passed acts relating to the formation and government of counties. There were no county commissions, but the probate judge in conjunction with the county selectmen were invested "with the usual powers and jurisdiction of County Commissioners" and as such were known as the county court. The probate court clerk (also known as the county clerk) was to keep the records of the court. This same structure was followed by Beaver County upon its creation in 1856.

The members of the territorial county court audited all claims against the county and authorized salaries and the purchase of supplies and services. They controlled all timber and water privileges and could grant mill sites for both grist mills and saw mills. They also determined land grants for herd grounds and set bounties on predators and varmints. The court granted water privileges and laid out roads and irrigation canals. Liquor licenses were obtained from the county court. The members created election precincts, road districts, and school districts and appointed superintendents of such districts. They also appointed other

county officials (e.g. sheriff, pound keeper, fence viewer) and set the salaries of each. The court located sites and oversaw the erection of public buildings, notably the county court house in 1875-1876 and its rebuilding after a fire in 1888. The selectmen in conjunction with the court (after statehood, the commissioners) were to provide for the maintenance of the indigent and incapacitated. They levied property taxes for county purposes, often accepting the tax payment in wheat or other grains.

With statehood in 1896 an actual board of county commissioners was created. The probate judge was removed, but the selectmen continued serving as commissioners until elections were held. The county clerk remained the clerk of the board, recording the minutes. The previous responsibilities were maintained and expanded.

There is an ongoing emphasis on road construction, upkeep and the installation of cattle guards. Noxious weed control and varmint reduction are also common topics throughout. Buildings, particularly the courthouse and jail, are built anew and maintained. Ordinances passed by the county provide regulations.

The commissioners served as canvassers of elections also appointing election officers, setting the boundaries of voting districts, and assigning polling places. Election results are regularly recorded in the minutes.

The members continued as a board of equalization for county property assessments with the added authorization to refund taxes erroneously collected; adjustments on individual property tax assessments, including abatements for veterans, the indigent, or others are itemized. Other taxes, such as a TV tax (begun in the late 1950s) and a transient room tax (1970s) are established and noted as part of budget discussions.

The commission continued to care for indigent and the infirm and to oversee public health and safety. Care of the indigent was particularly common during the Great Depression. Such proceedings frequently include a brief discussion of the family's personal and financial circumstances as well as the county's determination of what relief to allow. Social services and aging services continue, often in conjunction with towns in the county or other counties, in later decades. Civil defense activities are noted from 1943-1981.

Other responsibilities noted in the minutes include supervision of all county, district and precinct officials, boards and agencies. All personnel actions are noted, by individual name, for county employees from librarian to deputy sheriff to auditor. Such actions include appointments, hourly or salaried wage increases, and benefits. Requisition and bid proposals are similarly detailed whether for a camera for the sheriff's department or a heavy road grader. Annual budgets provide an overview of amounts per category or department.

Business licensing information, utility franchises, county leases of property or services, and cooperative agreements made with governmental agencies or private organizations are recorded. An airport was established in the early 1940s and maintained thereafter. Special service areas were created by the commission for hospital services (starting 1959), fire

protection (starting 1975), mosquito abatement (starting 1985), and waste management (starting 1993). By the 1960s, Beaver County was entering into cooperative agreements with neighboring counties, particularly the Five County Organization, to provide mental health services, aging services, and juvenile detention, and to promote economic development.

By the 1970s, details on zoning changes, attracting corporations, and layout of subdivisions assume an important place in the minutes. Information recorded relates to applications for zoning changes, zoning hearings, and use of revenue bonds for special economic projects. A building inspector position was created about the same time.

Given the diversity and extent of the county commission's activities, the minute books should be consulted not only by researchers seeking information on the commission, but by those seeking information on any county agencies, their personnel, or their services to individuals; on private contractors and their plans for work on county projects; and on private businesses, individuals, or charitable institutions holding taxable or untaxable within the county. Virtually any person living in, or any activity taking place in, unincorporated areas of the county was affected by the activities of the county commission and is reflected in the minutes.

ARRANGEMENT: The series is arranged chronologically by date of meeting.

RELATED RECORDS: Series 14492 contains indexes to the minutes. Also, while the minute books summarize the meetings of the commission, many other county agencies recorded the particulars. Thus the other holdings of the county commission and other Beaver county agencies should be consulted.

PROCESSING NOTE: The Beaver County Clerk as secretary for the Beaver County Commission should be contacted for other holdings. The first four volumes were filmed in 1966 by the Genealogical Society and processed by A.C. Cone in December 1994. The first volume is unlabeled. The index which appeared at the beginning of reel 2 was removed to form series 14492. Additional filming was done in 2002 and the series inventory updated.

CONTAINER LIST

Reel	Description
1	1856, Sep 8-1883, Oct 19 (unlabeled volume)
1	1883, Nov 3-1895, Jun 4 (Vol. A)
1	1895, Jul 15-1905, Jun 22 (Vol. B)
1	1905, Jul 10-1906, Dec 31 (Vol. C)
2	1906, Nov 12-1916, Mar 7 (Vol. C, cont.)
3	1916, Apr 3-1938, Dec 31 (Vol. D)
4	1939, Jan 3-1973, Nov 12 (Vol. E)
5	1973, Dec 6-1980, Dec 10 (Vol. E, cont.)
5	1981, Jan 2-2001, Dec 27 (Vol. F)

